Sketch of Unity

Shah Kay Sur Aur Saaz

INTRODUCTORY OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITTAI

SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITAI

1689-1752

Shah Abdul Latif was born on 1689. His father's name was Sayed Habib Shah. Habib Shah had two sons: Jamal Shah and Shah Abdul Latif. He got earlier education from Akhund Noor Muhammad Bhatti. He got religious education and from same teacher. Habib Shah himself was a Sufi. According to folk narration, Shah Latif was born with the prayer of a mystic Jogi Hashim Shah. (Allah knows better). Vishno Diyali (School for mystic learnings). Shah Latif's learning had input of various famous institutes of that time. Result of all those learnings were:

1. Meditations and learnings

2. Serving the creatures

3. Prevailing the music of love and traditions

In childhood he was sent to a teacher, Noor Muhammad Bhatti. The teacher started teaching him with the letters; Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai recited only the first letter (alif) and then said "Allah". The teacher went on with other letters but the pupil kept repeating Alif. Finding no other way, the teacher took the child to his father, Shah Habib. The child narrated to the father, the meaning of his utterances, which the illustrious father understood and fondly embraced little Latif who was destined to become a big name in the world.

"Shah Abdul Latif was an unusual child. He spent days by himself beside flowers, birds and beasts in the courtyard of Halla Haveli. He loved solitude, a trait he inherited form his father Shah Habib. He often left his hearth and home in order to live in fellowship with nature. He wandered about in the open. Once he was found, by his father, sleeping in a hollow of an old tree. At another occasion he was located in a sand dune lying in dazed stupor for three consecutive days. Incidentally a shepherd saw

him lying in that state, and informed his anxious father Shah Habib, who rushed to the spot and brought him home. But Shah Latif could not remain there for long, and one day disappeared again from his village without informing any one, as was his habit".

"Shah's habits from his youth were solitary living. He was often subject to fits. He used to remain aloof in the jungle for days. In his youth he became well known as a wanderer and also fond to remain in the company of Sanyasis, Jogis, Kapris, Samis and Faqirs. Eventually, he himself attracted a substantial number of followers who constantly remained in his company. It is on record that Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai visited an elder poet of Nasarpur, Shah Inat Rizvi, quite a number of times admired verses and held him in great respect, that is clear from the fact that he used to feel such an urge to go and meet him so that he would travel miles, from his home town Kotri to Nasarpur without getting tired. There he recited to him his own verses composed on the model of his mentor Shah Inat. At that time his poetry was simple and he seemed to have the same relation with Shah Inat as a disciple with his mentor. He would do so in the same manner as a respectful and receptive pupil might recapitulate in other words what his master had said earlier. Shah Inat was delighted to see that Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai took to poetry quite naturally. Shah Inat also valued his company because he saw a promising poet in him. In the beginning, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's poetry had an element of improvisation, and soon after a few years it gave place to vindication of his individual genius. Shah Inat died when Abdul Latif Bhitai was around twenty.

The fact that Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai was deeply influenced by him and that he lovingly admired his poetry, may be verified from the comparative study of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's "Surs" and Shah Inayat's **"**Suruds. Shah Inayat paved the way for emergence of **Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai as the greatest poet of Sindhi language**".

“After his marriage at Kotri, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai began to think of moving to a new place. In one of his solitary strolls, he had come to a spot, which he had found quite to his curious taste. There were the heaps of sand there and a thick jungle with pools of waters roundabout- a fit place for monastic. It was called Bhit, which literary means nothing more than heaps of sand”.

According to Raza Kazim, a well-known lawyer and music philosopher: “Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai didn’t have any connection with a Mughal court. His connection was with the tradition of Sufis and the Rishis; with the tradition of truth seeking. So his sources of learning were such people, his learning was not of the darbar or sarkar (Government). He made his Sur. Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai departed from this world at the age of 63, on 1165 Hijra, 1752 A.D. To commemorate his memory every year, on 14th Safar, an Urs (fair) is held at Bhit Shah where he lived the last years of his life and where his mausoleum stands. The Urs lasts for three days.

IMAGES IN THE POETRY OF SHAH LATIF BHITAI

All the fine arts are related to one another because all of them convey the sentiments and feeling of human beings. In poetry words play the part of colors and tunes. In painting colors, and music tunes are used as a medium, but in poetry images are created by words. The Poetry of Shah Latif has risen more from nature than books. He was a very keen observer. Nearly every landscape of Sindh is present in his poetry. May it be desert, forest, sea, river, boats, and ship, caravans, flocks of cranes, full moon nights, dawn, rainfall and many others.

New Music Tradition

Shah Abdul Latif's overwhelming popularity as a great poet has eclipsed his genius in music. Actually, poetry and music became synonymous with his art, his poems representing music in words. He was a composer of poetry and music at the same time. Since the revolution brought about by Amir Khusro (1255-1350 A.D.) in the theory and practice of Hindustani music, Shah Abdul Latif (1690-1751 A.D.) stands unique in his great vision of a new renaissance in the field of music, He was well-acquainted with the tradition of Hindustani Music, its origin as well as later development as is evident from the following historical data.

HIS RISALO

The Bulk of Shah Abdul Latif's poetry was collected and preserved by his followers in a compendium called the RISALO (The message). The whole Risalo is divided into chapters which are called the surs, a technical term of music, meaning 'modes of singing'. The original manuscript copies of Risalo contain 36 surs, out of which 5 do not contain the poems of Shah Latif. From the point of composition, the poems are of two types: the Bait and the Vaaee. The baits (Ar poems) which from the main body of Shah Abdul Latif's Poetry, extend to seven or more verses all rhyming with one another except the last one in which rhymes occurs in the middle at the end of the first hemistiah. These baits are meant to be recited in a loud sonorous voice. The Vaaee is simply an ingenious extension of the bait effected by the poet for the first time. Its first verse is the basic verse like that to the Ghazal, and is to be repeated after the recitation of each verse that follows. The number of verses in a Vaaee are generally not less than four and more than ten, and they all rhyme with one another at the ends. The Vaaees are means to be sung after the recitation of the baits.

SUR

There are different views regarding Surs. It can mean tone, note, and melody. In Shah Jo Kalam, Sur means mode of singing, musical themes, musical thoughts, hidden doctrine of Shah Abdul Latif's Sufi ideology, or sequential thematic description of events, stories and Sufi Philosophy.

The meaning of Sur can be best described as:

1. Thematic sequential description of events.

2. Symbolic, metaphoric Sufism.

Meaning and Define of VAAEE: It denotes different meanings: - (Voice, to talk, Language, Expression, Consideration, Kafi, Kalam, Raag).

Internal meaning, towards understanding the techniques of speaking;

Knowing the secretes of communication;

Understanding manners of speaking;

Disclosing secrets;

Positive saying: "Nice action, nice speaking, nice wordings, nice expression, predict the truth, not being able to utter, getting confused".

Theme/Subject Matter: Beauty, love, pain, sadness and separation are the subject matters of Vaaee. The themes of mysticism are presented in pretty and elegant style. In the modern times the new subject - matters have been introduced in Vaaee.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai divided his poetry into thirty Surs.

The Surs are melodic patterns in which folk tales are sung. The surs depicting these folk tales are divided into various sections (Episode). At the end of every section which contains Verses in varying numbers and at the end of every (Episode) there are some Vaaees in varying numbers.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai said that Sur are the themes of music; He called the themes Surs. So then he identified 28 or 29 Surs, in relation to his thinking, his circumstances/times. So he called them neither raga nor ragini he called them Surs. Out of those one Sur Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai called Sur Sarang. So for him Sarang has a different meaning and he says Sarang is of the rainy season. There is no mention of malhar anywhere.

The first category of Surs are called Surs of Soormies (heroines) they are seven: Sasui Punhu, Noori JamTamachi, Sorath Rai Diyach, Leela Chanesar, Suhni Mehar, Umar Marvee and Moomal Rano.

The second categaory of Surs are Ghatoo, Rip, Karayal, Samoondi, Dahar. And **the third** synonymous with the Indian Classical based Raga like Aiman, Kedaro, Kalyan, Sohni, Hussaini, KhamBhat, Sri, Kamod, Barvo etc.

Title Of Melody	English Translation Of Melody	No Of Verses	No Of Vaaees
Sur Kalyaan	Peace	50	3
Sur Yaman Kalyan	Passage to Peace	122	8
Sur Khambhat	Safe Haven	39	3
Sur Sassui (Abri)	Formidable Beauty (Haze)	103	3
Sur Sassui (Maz`zoori)	Formidable Beauty (Impediment)	55	2
Sur Sassui (Dessi)	Formidable Beauty (Native)	60	1
Sur Sassui (Kohyari)	Formidable Beauty (Mountain Trail)	41	-
Sur Sassui (Hussaini)	Formidable Beauty (Tribute)	96	4
Sur Suhni	Defiant Beauty	118	4
Sur Marui	Indomitable Damsel	107	-
Sur Moomal Rano	Naïve Damsel & Skeptical Lover	57	-
Sur Leela Chanesar	Flamboyant Beauty & Frugal Prince	29	-
Sur Kamod	Benign Lover	26	1
Sur Sorath	Pristine Prince & Mystifying Minstrel	38	-
Sur Sri Raag	Sea Voyage	66	3
Sur Saamoondi	The Sailors	45	1
Sur Saarang	Monsoon	43	2
Sur Kapaietie	The Spinner	20	1
Sur Dahar	Arid Delta	55	2
Sur Ghatu	Crocodile Killer	12	-
Sur Ripp	Calamity	28	-
Sur Kedaro	Elegy	43	-
Sur Aassa	Hope	53	3
Sur Brovo	Romance	24	-
Sur Khaahori	The Frugal	31	-
Sur Ramkali	The Hermits	117	1
Sur Poorab	Spiritual Realm	19	-
Sur Kaaraayal	The Swan	19	-
Sur Pirbhati	Dawn Verse	19	-
Sur Bilawal	Poise	34	-
Total	**30**	**1577**	**42**

1. **SUR KALYAN** (Melody of Peace)

First tenet of the Sufi faith is firm belief in Unity of God. Every compilation of the poetry of Latif therefore begins with odes and rhymes containing profuse praise of God who is Singular, Sublime, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Compassionate, Merciful and sublime Master of the universe. Everything exists in this world under Divine ordain and is reflective of divine beauty and glory. Blessing and bounties of God are boundless; however, an ordinary soul is unable to appreciate the extent of Divine blessing and compassion. The poet has addressed God as 'Sweetheart', 'Beloved', 'Adorable', 'Affable', 'Truth' and 'Physician'. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), who preached the unity of God, is epitomized as the best guide and intercessor between the believer and God. The Prophet (p.b.u.h), is described as the most favorite of God Almighty, as he was chosen to be the last Prophet (p.b.u.h) and the raison d'etre for the creation of the universe.

Shah Abdul Latif believes that god almighty is unique but that the mankind reflects 'diversity' derived from the 'Unity'. Both are thus two sides of the same coin. The Poet advises the seeker to endure trials and tribulations encountered in spiritual escalade, assuming that Life is but a stop-over in the journey of soul from 'infinity' back to 'eternity' and that there is always some wisdom in everything that God ordains for the apparent lot of human being.

Veritable Seeker would have to pass through 4 stages of spiritual enlightenment; 'Shariat' or the religious obligations of Islam; 'Tareeqat' or seeking a Mentor for self-effacement, 'Haqeeqat' or the higher level of consciousness and 'Ma'arifat' or embracing Divine presence in this life. While the four stages of Sufism are meant for an ascetic Sufi, the

message of Shah to an ordinary human being is to lead a virtuous life, professing piety, repentance abstinence and empathy which would bring peace and serenity to the soul.

Human being is exhorted to pass through the four stages of Sufism i.e. 'Shariat' or observance of religious requirements of Islam; 'Tareeqat' or seeking a spiritual guide,'Haqeeqat' or Higher level of Consciousness that transcends logical explanation of the temporal word and 'Ma'rifat or embracing the Divine presence in this life. While the four stages of Sufism are meant for an accomplished Sufi, the message of Shah to an ordinary soul is to lead a virtuous life, professing piety, repentance, abstinence and empathy which would bring peace and serenity to the soul.

'Sur Kalyan' takes its name from the Sanskrit word 'Kalyan' which means 'Peace'. Singing this melody is supposed to simulate peace and serenity within the soul. It is therefore chanted either at dawn or at sun set, as these are the most serene and tranquil moments of the day, when God Almighty should be evoked.

2. **SUR YAMAN KALYAN** (Melody of Pathway to peace)

The Spiritual theme of Sur Kalyan continues in Sur Yaman Kalyan, which would literally mean restraining the soul to enable it to attain peace and serenity. The seeker is exhorted to evoke God passionately and incessantly so as to sanitize the soul. Profound mysticism and metaphysical concepts make the melody sedate and serene. Shah Abdul Latif considers this world to be a magical show, ordained by Almighty Allah. Referring to Holy Quran wherein God says that "He is closer to the human being than the jugular vein", Shah Abdul Latif exhorts the veritable seeker to restrain perfidious passions and earn Divine pleasure.

Shah Abdul Latif also differentiates between a veritable seeker of 'Truth' and a pretender. While a veritable seeker would happily endure the ordeal of abstinence a pretender would whimper and abandon the path when it comes to the real test. The veritable seeker would neither let the public know his torment nor would he blame any human being for his/her ordeal. The Sufi poet believes that simple education would be worthless, unless accompanied by spiritual leadership. He therefore scolds the pretending erudite and scholars who seek God on misleading mundane trails.

The poet equates a spiritual guide or Mentor to an apostle and considers him essential for ascending the path of Divine Truth. Such a guide too is symbolized with an 'Eagle', an 'Ironsmith', an 'Archer' who strikes the seeker with cupid's arrow, a 'Vintner' and a Physician'. Divine Love is symbolized with a drink while a fervent seeker is symbolized with a drunkard. Shah Abdul Latif has also acknowledged the 13th century Persian mystic, Jalaluddin Muhammad Rumi, and has cited some of his sayings.

3. **SUR KHAMBAT** (Melody of Safe Haven)

This is an allegorical 'Sur' which adores the beauty of temporal beloved that is symbolized by the glow of the moon and star. Shah Abdul Latif believes that the beauty of nature and human beings is the handiwork of God, hence worthy of our esteem and approbation. Even the Sun, the moon and stars would lower their own glow in obeisance at the manifestation of the Beloved.

While considering the moon and stars as inferior compared to beloved, Shah Abdul Latif asks them to convey his greetings and messages to the Beloved, as they shine above the yards of both the lover and the beloved who are themselves separated by geographical distances. He also pledges the best feed and saddle to the camel if it takes him to the

beloved. The verses pertaining to the beauty of the beloved are also allegorical to the excellence of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) that far excels the shine of the sun, the moon and stars, altogether.

Shah Abdul Latif has utilized the parable of camel with a human body, in contrast to the human soul. While the soul would seek serenity, the body would be lured by mundane comforts and desires. Similarity, the camel or its parable human body would go for brackish bushes of 'Akk' and 'Lani' and disregard the best fodder, gem studded saddle, tufts and tassels. A human being is therefore advised to restrain the body from profane passions by invoking spiritual guidance and assistance, just as the camel would need to be shackled and buckled.

The word 'Khambhat' would literally mean shelter or refuge. The underlying message of the odes in this Sur is to find a safe haven from profane passions.

4. **Sur SASSUI: ABRI** (Melody of Immortal Beauty: Haze)

The epic story of a girl called 'Sansui'is a famous folk tale that started with her ominous birth and ended with her legendary death. 'Sassui' was born to a Hindu Raja. Her parents were initially delighted to have a child in the old age; however, the ordeal of 'Sassui' began on her baptism when a fortune-teller told her parents that, once grown up, the girl would marry a Muslim boy. Disappointed at this prediction, the parents of 'Sassui' put the baby in a casket and consigned it to the river. The casket was found by washer men, in the ancient port city 'Debol'.between Karachi and Hyderabad. They brought their boss, who was issueless and was delighted to get a baby 'Sassui' was thus raised as a Muslim girl.

The beauty of the adolescent 'Sassui' became famous far and wide. A prince from kech Makran called Punhoon came to see 'Sassui' and fell in love with her. Since 'Sassui' was the only child of her parents, they loved

her fervently and agreed to the proposed marriage of the couple only on the condition that the boy would live with the parents of the girl. When Punhoon's parents came to know that their son had settled down in a distant village, they sent his brothers to bring him back. However, 'Punhoon' refused to go back, saying that he had agreed to live with his in-laws. When all their endeavors to persuade Punhoon failed, his brothers hatched a plan to take him by force. One night they drugged 'Punhoon' and took him on their camels.

Not finding her loving husband on her bedside the next morning, 'Sassui' set off all by herself to follow the caravan of camels carrying 'Punhoon'. The path leading to Kech Passed through the rugged mountains and inhospitable terrain which included ravines, cliffs, and no habitat except perhaps the wild beasts. The exhausted and beset 'Sassui' was ultimately confronted by a perfidious herdsmen who gave her lecherous looks. The hapless 'Sassui' begged Almighty Allah to end her life, before a depraved being touched her frame. As the legend goes, the earth cracked open and 'Sassui' was buried alive. Having reached Kech, 'Punhoon' too begged his father to let him go back to his soul mate. On the way back, he found a fresh grave and begged God Almighty to end his life there. His wish too was met and both of them perhaps reunited after death. Their twin grave exists till date in the mountains at a distance of 45 miles west of Karachi.

The Underlying theme in 'Sur Sassui: Ma'azoori' reflects the longing of soul for love and the eventual rigors that life holds for a lover. Pathetic, deserted and exhausted Sassui stands bewildered, seeing nothing but her beloved. The poet, however, encourages her to carry on in the assiduous endeavor to seek reunion and never give up hope that the haze would someday clear enabling the vision of the beloved.

5. SUR SASSUI: MA'AZOORI (Melody of Immortal Beauty: Impediment)

'Sur Sassui: Ma'zoori' deals primarily with the cry of the soul which is physically weak to face the daunting challenges posed by the indomitable forces of nature. However, the poet advises the seeker or 'Sassui' to subdue the mundane desires and summon courage to catch up with the caravan of soul mate that might have advanced well into the thick mountains. Sassui blames the camel, camel riders and her brothers-in-law for having kidnapped her loving husband; the mountains for being too rugged; the wind for having effected the footprints of camels; the scorching sun for having sizzled the environs and the moon of 29th for not having shone after sunset which prevented her to continue her pursuit. Symbolizing her frantic journey through the wilderness, without any food or water, with this mortal life, the poet advises Sassui not to lose heart and continue the chase. In order to overcome the impediments in her journey, however, she is advised to invoke Devine assistance and stab the other side of her soul that harbours desire for mundane comforts with the dagger of 'NO'.

The parables of mountains, ravines, cliffs, wind, sun, hunger and thrust have been utilized to reflect the trials and tribulations that a human soul would face to ascend in spiritual voyage.

6. **SUR SASSUI: DESSI** (Melody of Immortal Beauty: Native)

Sur Sassui: Dessi which would literally mean Brazen Beauty: Native deals primarily with the local customs and taboos, including the means of transport and the rugged terrain that besieged the Brazen Beauty and made it hard for her to continue her pursuit. The Melody thus contains Sassui's discussion with the flora and fauna of the desert. She blames the sandstorm for having effaced the footprints of the camel caravan; the sun for having set down so soon; the moon for not having risen apace after the sun-set; and the rocks for being rugged that made her pursuit of Punhoon impossible. Sassui also fears that perhaps it was her Hindu parentage that the clan of her loving husband did not like. While Sassui blames the topography, wild life, foliage custom, taboos and the clan of Punhoon for her torment, she still adores her beloved.

The poet has also given the local names of the camels according to their age, so as to indicate the scrupulous consideration of desert dwellers for each and every animal that they raise and the expectations they hold from the animals according to its capacity and experience. The Melody also refers to phoenix that never sets foot on ground and the musk deer that is bewildered smelling for the first time the fragrance oozing out of its own navel. Shah Abdul latif surmises that Sassui too was perhaps bewildered like a musk deer or tormented for not being able to set foot on ground like phoenix but that she realized that it made her precious and immortal.

The underlying message in this Melody is that the beloved is above all kinds of consideration and that nothing could stop the lover, who would continue to seek the beloved without laying any blame on him.

7. **SUR SASSUI: KOHYARI** (Melody of Immortal Beauty: Mountain Trail)

The melody of Sur Sassui: Kohyari or mountain Trail deals with journey of Sassui through rugged mountains and the reason why she was compelled to pursue the tortuous trail. In fact the word Kohyari in Sindhi parlance would denote a 'friendly mountain' that the desert dwellers are accustomed to and consider a part and parcel of their daily life. Sassui therefore shares her grief and torment with the mountains, the beasts and the foliage. However, Sassui never seeks to hold her beloved responsible for any wrongdoing. She rather seeks to acknowledge her own failing that led to her ominous ordeal.

It may be recalled that Sassui was a pampered child of her parents and therefore could have been indulgent and frolic, least realizing that her indolence could cost her an everlasting separation from her loving husband and a fateful nightmare. The poet therefore again scolds Sassui for her indolence.

The underlying message in this melody is that the veritable lover would always take the eventual mundane ordeals in a stride and be brace for the consequence, hoping that God almighty is the most Munificent and would always reward the seeker. Those who follow this path would be rewarded while those who do not would languish in pain without any outcome.

8. **SUR SASSUI: HUSSAINI** (Melody of Immortal Beauty: Tribute)

In the Melody of Sur SASSUI: Hussaini Sassui talks to her kith and kin, telling them how handsome her husband is and that she alone could reckon his grace and glory. The word Hussaini actually holds Arabic connotation that reminds us of the tragedy of the battle of Karbala where the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), Imam Hussain, fought valiantly embracing martyrdom. The melody thus contains a tribute to the two lovers, whose lamentable death resembles the

tragedy of Karbala. In this Melody, Sassui talks to her mother and friends sharing with them glamour and grace of her beloved spouse, as also the grief that had befallen her. While defending the trust and confidence that her spouse had in her, Sassui feels that it was perhaps because of her Hindu parentage that his Baloch clan brothers did not like and therefore kidnapped their brother, leaving Sassui forlorn.

Sassui is obviously tormented by her passion, sizzling heat, arduous journey and the deceitful brothers-in-law. The Poet, however, advises Sassui not to give up hope and passionately pursue the unremitting struggle to regain her lost love.

9. **SUR SUHNI** (Melody of Defiant Damsel)

The legendary folk tale of 'Suhni' is an epic melodrama of passion, faith, fidelity and defiance to temporal taboos. As the legend goes, the daughter of a Punjabi potter from Gujrat, called 'Suhni', which would literally mean the 'Beauty' fell in love with a visiting merchant from Bokhara, in the Present day Uzbekistan, named 'Izzat Beg'. The Parents of 'Suhni' refused to give the hand of their daughter in marriage to 'Izzat Beg' and forced her to marry with her cousin called 'Dum'. 'Izzat Beg' was obviously disheartened but was so deeply involved in love with 'Suhni' that he did not leave the area. Nevertheless, he was forced to move out of the town and settled across River Chenab, where he raised buffaloes. He was thus called 'Mehar' which would literally mean a herdsman raising buffalos. 'Suhni' too preserved in her love and swam through the river every night with the help of a pitcher. Weary of Suhni's persistent passion for Mehar, her family decided to let her perish in the river. Hence they furtively replaced the fired pitcher that Suhni took every night to swim across the river, with an unfired one, bearing the same design and colors. As the night fell, Suhni grabbed the pitcher and left for her routine nocturnal journey. She entered river in the dark night and torrential rain

that had inundated it. Due to inclement weather and the consequent surge, Suhni was drowned and consumed by the aquatic creatures.

In the melody, 'Suhni' is also referred to as 'Juvenile' while 'Mehar' is also called as 'Sahar' as also the Herdsman. Both are portrayed as veritable seekers of Divine Truth. On the other hand, 'Dam', the wedded husband of Suhni, is symbolized as a perfidious being with base passions. The pitcher symbolizes the frail human body which is vulnerable to mundane ordeal whereas the deception by parents of Suhni as also the social taboos and rituals reflects the likely difficulties in spiritual ascension.

Shah Abdul Latif describes metaphors of the challenges that Suhni would have faced in the form of ferocious aquatic creatures such as; crocodiles, alligators, pike fish, crabs as also the surge, cascade, ruckus, and rage in the river, explain the difficulties that a seeker would face in his spiritual ascension.

10. **SUR MARUI** (Melody of Indomitable Damsel)

The Legendary folk tale of 'Omar Marui' is an account of a 14th century hapless but gorgeous desert dwelling girl. Her parents had employed a servant for domestic chores, who asked for the hand of Marui for marriage. The parents of 'Marui' refused the proposal as they wanted to marry her with her cousin. The brokenhearted servant went to Ruler named 'Omar' and lured him to snatch 'Marui' from her fiancé. Omar was tempted and charmed by the beauty of 'Marui'. Knowing that her parents wouldn't agree to the proposal from him either, he decided to kidnap Marui. According to the plan. Marui was abducted while she fetched water from a well near the village. Omar then started wooing 'Marui' and offered palatial comforts to her. When that didn't work, he started coaxing and coercing her but 'Marui' refused to conceded, maintaining that he could be her foster brother.

The rebuffs of ‘Marui’ to palatial comforts as also coercion from Ruler of the day reflected her tenacity and resolve to reject mundane lures and stand firm in fidelity to her folks. Her refusal of gems and jewelry or silken robes and fine cuisine are utilized in this Melody as metaphor to underline the need for an ordinary seeker to follow righteous path and remain steadfast in pursuing the quest for serenity and calm of spiritual life. The fortitude and endurance manifested by ‘Marui’ also symbolize the abstinences and self-abnegation of spiritual seekers. Similarly, ‘Omar’ reflects the image of a tyrant and a person of profane passions.

Shah Abdul Latif has also sought to illustrate the socio-economic condition of the desert dwellers that are happy living in their shabby shacks and eating wild desert grains, while depending upon the rainfall for growing crops and raising cattle, besides spinning the yarn that manifest the frugality of poor desert dwellers.

‘Sur Marui’ is also considered a song of patriotism as also a spiritual metaphor. ‘Marui’ pines to return to her hometown ‘Malir’ like a soul that would long to return to its original abode of eternity.

11. **SUR MOOMAL RANO** (Melody of Naïve Damsel & Skeptical Lover)

This is yet another legendary folk tale of a naïve Damsel called ‘Moomal’ who set off on a journey to hunt a lost treasure and fell in love with a nimble but skeptical lover called ‘Rano’ who is also referred to as ‘Sodho’. The story is full of magic, adornment, passion, deceit, coercion and skepticism. As the legend goes, a Raja of a ‘Gujjar’ family ruled over ‘Mirpur Mathelo’ in Sindh in the 15th century. One day, he went hunting on the Indus bank and chased a wild boar. The boar entered Indus and water dried up as the boar crossed it. He too followed the boar and killer it. Later, he found out that the boar magic powers in its tooth that caused the water dry up. He collected the treasure and crossed the river back with magic power of the boar tooth. The magic tooth brought prosperity

to the Raja and its fame spread wide and far, attracting the envious. A jealous person disguised as a mendicant came to Raja's home and was able was able somehow to persuade 'Moomal' to give the tooth to him. This enraged her father.'Samool' intervened and pledged to trace the Mendicant to retrieve the lost treasure.

The two sisters, accompanied by gorgeous maids, went to settle on the banks of a tributary called 'Kak' in 'Jesalmir', and built an arcane palace, known as 'Kak Mahal'. It was surrounded by a shallow moat with figurines of ferocious lions posted all around and walls inlaid by mirrors. Path from main gate to the chamber of Moomal was made labyrinthine and it was announced that Moomal would marry the person who was astute enough to reach her chamber. However, when a visitor came, he was escorted by a smart maid who would mysteriously disappear midway, leaving the guest at the mercy of loin figurines to terrify and servant guards to rob. A nimble lover called 'Rano' finally succeeded to reach the chamber of naïve 'Moomal' who forget all about her mission and fell in love with him.'Rano' started visiting 'Moomal' quite often. However, due to jealous coercion from a Prince, he could not visit 'Moomal' for some days.'Rano' finally managed to escape the coercion and returned to see 'Moomal'; however, he found her sleeping with someone and went back, least realizing that it was 'Soomal', who shared her bed not another man. Apprehending skepticism of 'Rano' 'Moomal' set on yet another journey to find her beloved 'Rano'. However, the latter refused to patch up .Disappointed, 'Moomal' decided to end her life by mounting on the pyre to be cremated alive. Only then did 'Rano' realize his skepticism and did the same. The two Lovers thus reunited, after death. Labyrinthine palace on the Kak quay and the story are the metaphors that Shah Abdul Latif has utilized to explain the mystifying magical show arranged by God Almighty, for our temporal life.

12. SUR LEELA CHANESAR (Melody of Flamboyant Princess& Faithfull Prince)

Folk Tale of 'Leela Chanesar' is an account of a flamboyant princess called 'Leela' who lent out her frugal loving husband prince 'Chanesar' for a night to his veritable lover, in exchange for a precious necklace. As the legend goes, 'Leela' had an obsessive penchant for gem and jewelry, whereas another girl, named 'Kaunroo', who was a spoilt child, desired to marry with 'Chanesar'. Finding it impossible to obtain faithful Prince 'Chanesar' as a husband, 'Kaunroo' disguised as a housemaid and sought a job in the palace of 'Leela and Chanesar'; just to be able to glimpse her love every day. One day,'Leela' found 'Kaunroo' Sniffle, while doing domestic chores. 'Leela' asked 'Kaunroo' about the reason and the latter was forced to divulge her secret love. However, bearing in mind the flamboyance of 'Leela', she offered a precious gem studded necklace if she lent her husband just for a night to her. Flamboyant 'Leela' was lured by the necklace and agreed to lend her husband for a night to 'Kaunroo'. Since it was hard to persuade the faithful prince to sleep with an unwedded woman, the two ladies hatched a plan to try it out when 'Chanesar' was dead drunk. The plan succeeded and 'Leela' got necklace while 'Kaunroo' realized her dream of sleeping with her soul mate. However, the conspiracy infuriated Prince 'Chanesar' who he decided to chuck out 'Leela'.

After the incident. 'Leela' repented profusely and requested 'Chanesar' for forgiveness but the latter did not listen to her entreaties. Leela became desperate and started making effort to somehow see her former loving husband. She disguised herself as a dancer and performed at a wedding party which was attended, among others, by 'Chanesar'; just to have a glimpse of him.'Chanesar', who had been trying to forget his former wife, still admired her subconsciously. Seeing his princess wife perform in public shocked him and he dropped dead. Seeing her love lifeless before her eyes, 'Leela' too dropped dead. Both of them perhaps found reunion in death.

The Legend of 'Leela Chanesar' is a metaphor that shows the fall of soul from Divine grace for having exchanged faith and loyalty for mundane extravagance, Shah Abdul Latif, therefore, exhorts and ordinary seeker to keep the moral fiber intact and resist mundane lures. Thereby, he also seeks to underline that God Almighty could exact a very heavy price from slipping up souls, even in this mortal world. He therefore advises the seeker to give up pride and conceit and observe modesty and humility.

13. **SUR KAMODE** (Melody of Benign Lover)

This is yet another legendary folk tale which recounts the love story of a benign Prince of 'Samo' dynasty in Sindh, called 'Jam Tamachi', who fell in love and married with a fisher maid named 'Noori' from the 'Keenjhar' Lake, near the present day Hyderabad. As the legend goes, 'Jam Tamachi' was fond of hunting. One day, he went to hunt on the banks of 'Keenjhar' Lake and spotted a young fisher maid named 'Noori'. He instantly fell in love and asked for her hand in marriage which was happily granted. Noori thus became a princess and quickly adapted herself to the royal poise, becoming the most favorite princess of 'Jam Tamachi'. The benign Prince showered his opulence on all fishermen of 'Keenjhar' Lake and the entire community was content. The grave of 'Noori' is Located in the middle of the Keenjhar Lake.

Shah Abdul Latif seeks to utilize the metaphor of Noori in 'Sur Kamode' to explain how an ordinary soul can be blessed out of the blue by Divine grace, simply because of humility and modesty. He also gives graphic details of austere living conditions of the fishermen and compares the same with palatial lifestyle of a benign Ruler. The Ruler's munificence reflects the virtues of egalitarianism and the need to focus on spiritual ascendancy rather than decadence.

14. **SUR SORATH** (Melody of Pristine & Mystifying Minstrel)

This is an astounding folk tale whereby a pristine Prince of 'Jhunagarh' named 'Rai Diach' is said to have chopped his own head to be presented to a mystifying Minstrel, who actually happened to be his nephew. As the legend goes, the Raja had a sister who was issueless and went for blessing to a Hermit. The Hermit told her that she would be blessed with a son but that he would take the life of her brother. The princess went back home and was blessed with a son in due course of time. However, recalling the prediction of Hermit, she put the child in a casket and consigned it to the river. The casket was picked up by a poor Bard who lived in a nearby Principality, ruled by Raja 'Ani Rai'. The Bard raised the boy and named him 'Beejal'. When grown up,'Beejal' started grazing herd. One day, while grazing herd in the jungle, he heard an enchanting musical tune in the air. On further investigation, he found that it were the dried intestinal skin of a wild boar hanging on a bought that produced that produced the musical tune. He brought it home and made a fiddle with it. The tune that he played on that fiddle were so enthralling that he became famous as a magical Minstrel.

Coincidently, 'Ani Rai' too was also blessed with the 8th daughter whom he put in a casket and consigned it to the river. That casket was picked up a potter in the Principality of 'Jhunagarh' who raised the girl and named her 'Sorath'. When 'Sorath' attained adolescence, she turned out to be a gorgeous girl. Hearing of her plenteous beauty, 'Ani Rai' decided to seek her hand in marriage; least realizing that it was his own forsaken daughter. Knowing the impious designs of 'Ani Rai', 'Rai Diach' took 'Sorath' to his palace and married with her.'Ani Rai' wanted take revenge from 'Rai Diach' but was not powerful enough. He therefore proclaimed in the principality that anyone who brought him the head of 'Rai Daich' would be abundantly rewarded. 'Bejaal' was not home but his mother took the bet and pledge that her son would do the job. When 'Beejal' came to know the pledge of his mother he was deeply distressed.

However. Unable to say ‘No’ to his mother, he undertook the journey to ‘Jhunagarh’.

There, he was able to enthrall the parsimonious Prince by his melodious tunes and ‘Rai Diach’ agreed in ecstasy to chop his head. ‘Beejal’ took the cranium to ‘Ani Rai’ who was shocked in disbelief. He rebuked ‘Beejal’ and banished him from the principality.’Beejal’ too was ashamed at his abhorrent act and went back to ‘Jhunagarh’ with the severed crane, where he found ‘Sorath’ being cremated as ‘Satte’ on the funeral pyre of ‘Rai Diach’ torso. ‘Beejal’ was so conscience-stricken that he too jumped on the pyre and was cremated alive, together with the husband and wife.

15. **SUR SRIRAG** (Melody of Sea Voyage)

Having a long coastline, Sindh has always offered opportunities of trade with the rest of the world through its ancient port of ‘Debol’ or the present day Karachi port. The sailors and merchants usually took spices and clothes form the ports of Sindh or even from inland, via River Indus and brought back gemstones, pearls, gold and silver from Aden and Lanka. The journey took them months and years to complete and return.

Utilizing the allegory of the life of a sailor on the high seas with a frail ship; having pores in the hull and tattered planks through which saline water seeps in damaging the merchandise; Shah Abdul Latif has sought to highlight the challenges that a veritable seeker would face in his spiritual enlightenment. Shah Abdul Latif symbolizes Captain of the ship and the diver of deep oceans with spiritual guides or Mentors, who would steer their disciples in the same way as the captain assumes responsibility of goods and passenger through troubled waters. The mentors would also be capable of diving to bring out pearls of virtue. Here too, Shah Abdul Latif considers Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) to be the supreme guide and Mentor for the ordinary being.

Considering the hazards and perils of high seas, Shah Abdul Latif cautions the sailor or an ordinary human being to load only bona fide merchandise of virtues and good deeds on the ship of life. He further advises the human being to keep strong oars. Robust mast, sails and other support equipment, so as to be fully prepared to face the eventual hazards. The human being is also advised to seek guidance of the Captain or the Mentor throughout the journey.

The 'Sur Srirag' is one of the chief melodies of music. It is sung in evening.

16. **SUR SAMOONDI** (Melody of Sailors)

Sur Samoondi is read together within Sur Srirrag. Shah Abdul Latif has explained in this Sur the anxiety and distress of the waiting wives of the sailors, who were depressed, watching their husband sailor depart but would be anxiously awaiting their return to the harbour and home, bearing in mind that in those days the lack of modern communication systems made the sea voyage even more vulnerable and hazardous. While the waiting wives rejoice the return of their sailor husbands, they again deplore the departure of their soul mates who are ready to depart on yet another voyage. Explaining the torment of the waiting wives, he also exhorts the sailors to be watchful of the sea hazards and keep their ship in tidy condition while at the same time he asks the wives to stay patient and loyal to their sailor spouses.

Shah Abdul Latif has utilized the parable of the life of a sailor to explain the ordeal of a veritable seeker of 'Truth' who undertakes the spiritual journey several times, disregarding all the perils. Those who lead such a dexterous and diligent life are appreciated while the indolent and indifferent are chastised by Latif.

The word Samoondi would literally mean of or related to the ocean. Hence .the 'Sur' contains graphic detail of the lives of sailors as also their waiting waives.

17. **SUR SARANG** (Melody of Monsoon)

Desert dwellers depended solely upon rainfall and raising cattle for their livelihood in arid zones, especially in those days when irrigation system were not so developed. Shah Abdul Latif has therefore dedicated a complete Melody or 'Sur' to the monsoon. He loved the serenity and calm of the desert so much that he made a sand dune his final resting place.

Odes and rhymes in this 'Sur' portray graphic details of the feeling and lifestyle of desert dwellers as also the rainfall,

Especially the movement of swirling clouds, the lightning and thunder burst that would bring prosperity to arid zones, by helping the grass grow to feed the cattle for milk, curd and butter and yield bumper crops that could conclude the drought and shortage of staple food. In this 'Sur' Shah Abdul Latif has prayed for the prosperity of peasants not only in Sindh but all over the world. He has specifically mentioned the regions of what are now India, China, Afghanistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan as also Rome. He has also censured the hoarders and greedy profiteers who fleece the poor and needy.

Metaphorically, the monsoon represents hope of an ordinary being for divine blessing that could come any time. At the same time, the patience, parsimony and prudence of the desert dwellers is glorified as a lesson for an ordinary being not to despair or lose heart because of the hardship of life.

18. **SUR KAPAITIE** (Melody of Spinners)

The word 'Kapaitie' means a spinner. Ginning cotton, spinning yarn and weaving cloth on spindles and handlooms have been traditional cottage industry of Sindh. Clothes are also considered essential for Eid days or religious festivities and anyone who spun or weaved well would be recognized and appreciated while those who are oblivious or indolent would have to suffer losses. Shah Abdul Latif has used the parables of spinners, spinning wheel, yarn and fabric to explain the good deeds of human beings while connoisseurs of the product traders are utilized as metaphors for judges on the Day of Judgment .The Eid Day and tomorrow represent the Judgment Day where the virtuous would be rewarded for the work they did in their lives.

Shah Abdul Latif cautions the ordinary being, in the first place, that nothing could be achieved in life without constant struggle and unrelenting toil. The spinners have to be diligent and dexterous not to leave any lumps or flaws in their yarn so that connoisseurs may not reject their product.

19. SUR DAHAR (Melody of Arid Delta)

In accordance with the Islamic faith, Shah Abdul Latif considers this mortal world as a transient stop-over in the journey from 'infinity' back to 'eternity'. The world could witness ostensible affluence during this stop-over which could vanish anytime, leading to desolation due to unforeseen reasons. The allegory of a delta, which was supposed to have thrived when there was abundant water but was deserted after the change of course by tributaries, has been utilized to underline the ephemeral nature of mundane opulence and its vulnerability to the forces of nature. The mankind is therefore exhorted not be indolent and be mindful of the life that would come after death.

Shah Abdul Latif has utilized the allegory of Delta where many civilizations flourished but perished subsequently creating drought and desolation. He has utilized parables of Delta habitants, including, fishermen, merchants and pelicans of the rivers as also the flora, fauna and aquatic creatures, to indicate how each one of them would have been affected by the drought stricken delta. Those who remained vigilant abandoned the area well before the drought struck the delta but those who stayed indolent were ravaged by the drought.

Seeing the plight of remaining habitants, flora and fauna, the poet prays to God Almighty and seeks the help of Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h),to help the distraught humans, animals, aquatics and the trees, Thereby, he also exhorts all living beings not be indolent and do good deeds before it becomes too late and death defeats Life.

20. **SUR GHATU** (Melody of Crocodile Killer)

This too is a legendary folk tale concerning the adventure of a handicapped fisherman called 'Moriero' living in a small village near Karachi. Six of his sturdy brothers suddenly disappeared and did not return from their routine fishing chore. The club-foot 'Moriero' suspected that his brothers must have disappeared in a nearby vortex that was known to be perilous but none had returned to tell precise details of the peril that prevailed there. 'Moriero' decided to discover the nasty evil and set off with the help of a few men and bulls. He also made an iron cage and locked himself inside before descending in the vortex tying the cage with bulls on the riverbank. After descending into water his cage was attacked by a hefty crocodile and, while his cage was in the crocodile mouth, it was pulled out by the bulls and the crocodile was killed. The handicapped 'Moriero' thus manifested his skills and intellect by killing a lethal crocodile that had taken many lives of sturdy people before.

The bone of his brothers were recovered from crocodile's stomach and buried in the foothills, north east of Karachi. 'Moriero' himself spent the rest of his life as a guardian of the graves. Till date, this place is called the "graveyard of Moriero".It is located at a few miles from main Karachi, near the cremation ground of Hindus.

The Melody seeks to highlight that skills and dexterity of a handicapped 'Moriero' could also be more important that the endeavors of unskilled sturdy men.

21. **SUR RIPP** (Melody of Calamity)

Shah Abdul Latif was cognizant of the plight of poor and needy, especially the destitute and forlorn women who missed their spouses in their hour of need. 'Sur Ripp' describes the distress of such a women, who languish in cold winter without proper bedding or cozy quilts in their dilapidated shacks, because their husbands are either away for long time due to some mundane chores or could even have passed away, leaving them at the mercy of hot and cold in life.

This allegory seeks to explain the impression of a 'Sufi' who lives with abstinence in the hope that he would be able to embrace Divine presence in this life. The poet exhorts him to shroud his feeling in perfect poise and calm. Shah Abdul Latif has chosen the parable of kiln which produce useful fired bricks, only after having burnt within, without spewing smoke out in the open air. A veritable seeker or 'Sufi' has to follow a similar course to endure the ordeal of mundane struggle in total secrecy, to be able to attain spiritual ascendancy and embrace Divine presence in this mortal life.

22. **SUR KEDARO** (The Elegy)

Muslims remember the tragedy of 'Karbala', where a small contingent of 72 faithful of 'Imam Hussain' valiantly fought a battle with an organized army of 80,000 from the then Umayyad ruler 'Yazeed', in the battle field of 'Karbala' near Najaf in Iraq. All the gallant and male family members of Imam Hussain save an ill infant, embraced martyrdom.

The conflict was rooted in claimed over 'Khilaafat' of the vast Islamic Emirate. The 5th Caliph 'Imam Hassan' had already entrusted the governance of Syria to 'Muawiya' while he himself settled down at Medina along with his younger brother 'Imam Hussain'. After the death of 'Muawiya' his son 'Yazeed' usurped the title and got 'Imam Hassan' poisoned and wanted 'Imam Hussain' to pledge allegiance to him as the 'Khalifa'. 'Imam Hussain' quietly left Medina for Mecca. However, the 'Koofis' invited 'Imam Hussain', promising to pledge allegiance to him. 'Imam Hussain' sent his cousin 'Moslim to find out the sincerity of 'Koofis'.Having reached 'Koofa','Moslim' reported back that 'Koofis' seemed sincere. So, 'Imam Hussain' undertook journey from Mecca to Koofa. However, the 'Koofis' soon changed their mind and martyred 'Moslim', of which 'Imam Hussain' was still unaware.

On arrival, Imam Hussain Learnt from 'Hur' about martyrdom of 'Muslim'. He now wanted to return to Mecca but their return routes were blocked and people insisted that he pledge allegiance to Yazeed as 'Khalifa'. Seeing this, 'Imam Hussain' ordered the tents to be pitched in the plains of 'Karbala'. He had a total of 40 infantry and 32 cavalry soldiers when 'Hur' came and joined him. However, all supplies to the contingent, including potable water, were chocked. Battle began between the two asymmetric armies. Final assault was launched on the small contingent of Imam Hussain on 10th Muharram, setting fire to tents.'Imam Hussain' Laid his Life and embraced martyrdom.

Shah Abdul Latif has described in touching tones the tragedy that befell 'Imam' Hussain and his small contingent. He has also given a graphic

account of the preparation made for battle, the types of weapons used and the gallantry of warriors as also the courage and strength of character displayed by the venerable ladies.

23. **SUR ASSA** (Melody of Hope)

The word ‘Assa’ would literally mean ‘hope’, which a human being holds in life that God would someday have mercy and forgive sinners seekers. Shah Abdul Latif quotes verses from Holy Quran and ‘Hadith’ to elucidate the relationship between humans and God Almighty. He suggests that mankind must be ready to endure all privations and be resilient resisting all mundane desires and temptation to sin. To focus on spiritual enlightenment.

Shah Abdul Latif exhorts the mankind to strive to perceive the metaphysical unity of being and shun duality, multiplicity or paganism. We must follow and adhere to Divine laws contained in ‘Shariat’, before beginning contemplation and meditation that would ultimately lead us to attain spiritual enlightenment. The seeker would be able to attain spiritual ascension only with firm faith, perseverance and hope. Those who live their lives in accordance with Divine ordains and believe that the purpose of their life in this world is to seek pleasure of God in the world hereafter, would be duly rewarded.

Shah Abdul Latif has also chastised the pretending pious of all faiths and beliefs, especially those who are fickle or unfaithful. He thus says.

Reciting ‘Kalma’ alone; doesn’t make you Muslim,

Deceit, ‘shirk’ and devil; reside within you,

Muslim in appearance; you are idolater inside.

24. **SUR KHAHORI** (Melody of Abstemious)

The word Khahori is used to describe a particular cult of abstemious snake charmer 'Jogis' who wander in the wilderness, especially in 'Ganjo' mountain range between the present day Hyderabad and Karachi, before going to their ultimate destination 'Lahut' that denotes their spiritual realm or 'infinity'. This type of 'Jogis' believed more in self-abnegation than in the observance of religious rituals They depended only upon the wild berries and other desert herbs for their livelihood and kept hunting snakes. They were thus the most resolute and tenacious in pursuing their abstemious life in search of Truth.

Recounting the frugal living condition and passion for abstinence of these 'Jogis', Shah Abdul Latif describes how they lived on a minimal and simple diet, wore nominal clothes and kept night vigils to remember lord with constant craving and repentance. He also explain how the 'Jogis', who were denuded of any desire for cozy bedding , clothing, Lavish cuisine or mundane comforts, slept on rugged terrain and avoided public gaze.

25. **SUR RAMKALI** (Melody of Hermits)

Shah Abdul Latif began befriending a group of abstemious 'Jogis' in his early youth and travelled far and wide in their cohort, visiting places like 'Ganjo Takkar', Dwarkha, Lakhpat, Hinglaj, Lahut, Jessalmir etc. However. After some years of association, the 'Hermits' abandoned him surreptitiously and disappeared during their stay at 'Hinglaj' while the pristine poet was asleep, perhaps due to differences on the form of worship and devotional practices. The poet philosopher was impressed with their austerity, asceticism, night vigils, fear of eventual Divine retribution and impeccable self-abnegation.

The parsimonious has explained the austere living condition of jogis whom he remembered with different names such as; 'Lahuti', 'Abstemious', 'Kaapree', 'Sami', 'Sanyassi', 'Denuded', 'Mute', 'Deaf' etc.

The word 'Ramkali' would literally mean a 'Divine bud' or people having celestial persona. Shah Abdul Latif seeks to explain the common points of life and struggle of 'Hermits' to attain Divine pleasure rather than dwelling upon differences in faith. His passion for these 'Hermits' is visible in the odes and rhymes in this Melody.

26. **SUR BROVO** (Melody of Romance)

In this early youth, Shah Abdul Latif is said to have fallen in love with a noble Damsel. Family of the venerable Lady initially admonished the parsimonious poet but eventually agreed to the proposal for marriage and the couple lived a happy life, though without any issue. However, the initial rebuff did have an impact on the life of the poet.

'Sur Brovo' too is allegorical. While it seeks to depict the feelings of mundane lovers it also contains spiritual passion. Odes and rhymes in this Sur exhort the ordinary beings to seek veritable love for Almighty Creator of the universe, who is symbol of true Beloved. Shah Abdul Latif maintains that signs of Divine beauty and glory are discernible on earth and in the skies. Seekers is, however, advised not give precedence to mundane love over spiritual love for Divinity. At the same time, the poet cautions that God could ostensibly appear capricious and mysterious; being sometimes the most Merciful and Gracious while at times indifferent and apathetic. However, the seeker must take His ways to be either an incentive to pursue or a reprimand for eventual imprudent human demeanor. Shah Abdul Latif reiterates that this mortal life is transient stop-over in the human journey from 'infinity' back to 'eternity'. We must therefore continue struggling to win the esteem and approbation of creator almighty.

27. **SUR POORAB** (Melody of Spiritual Realm)

The word 'Poorab' would literally mean 'East' which is the direction where the sun rises and sheds daylight on the darkness of night to launch the day. The word is thus allegorical to 'spiritual light' or spiritual realm. This is a brief Melody that describes the poet's passion to undertake a voyage for pilgrimage to the holy land where the Mausoleum of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) is located. It also contains the impressions of nomadic ascetics.

In this short 'Sur' Shah Abdul Latif utilizes the metaphor of the crow to explain the task of a messenger Angel who serves as the means of communication between the lover and the beloved. The poet also asks the crow to take his message to his beloved, urging it to maintain a humble and respectful demean our while delivering the message to his beloved, urging it to maintain a humble and respectful demeanor while delivering the message in confidence. The crow is also considered a conventional courier, especially in this part of the world.

28. **SUR KARAYAL** (Melody of Swan)

The word 'Karayal' would literally mean a beautiful bird that could be a Peacock or a Swan. The word has thus been allegorically utilized to explain the traits of 'Spiritual Leaders' such as; Prophets and saints who seeks higher ideals for themselves as also for their disciples. Shah Abdul Latif has contrasted peacocks and swans that represent spiritual leaders with storks and herons that represent ordinary being or people having profane passions. He has also utilized the metaphor of lake sludge, to explain the dirt and filth that exists in the world. He maintains that ordinary being, like herons and cranes, fails to perceive pearls lying at the depth of water and is content with catching fish while spoiling the clean lake water. Shah Abdul Latif has also utilized the parables of fatal

venomous snakes living in deserts to elucidate the malicious people living in this world.

The swan is advised by Shah Abdul Latif to avoid the company of storks and herons and soar up in the sky to discern and pick out pearls that lie at the depth of waters. These pearls are parables of cherished values that never die.

29. **SUR PIRBHATI** (Melody of Dawn)

This is again a short composition in the compilation of the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif. The word 'Pirbhati' would literally mean 'of or related to dawn' which is the most opportune moment to sing praises of the most Merciful and his munificence. The melody is therefore intoned at dawn.

Shah Abdul Latif has utilized the metaphor of a benign lord 'Sappar' to explain the munificence of God. He has also utilized the metaphor of a Bard to exhort ordinary being to strive to attain Divine pleasure.

Saying that God Almighty is the most Merciful and Munificent, Shah Abdul Latif exhorts ordinary being not to lose faith in His generosity as He alone is the succor and guide and responds to our prayers without asking for anything in return.

30. **SUR BILAWAL** (Melody of Poise)

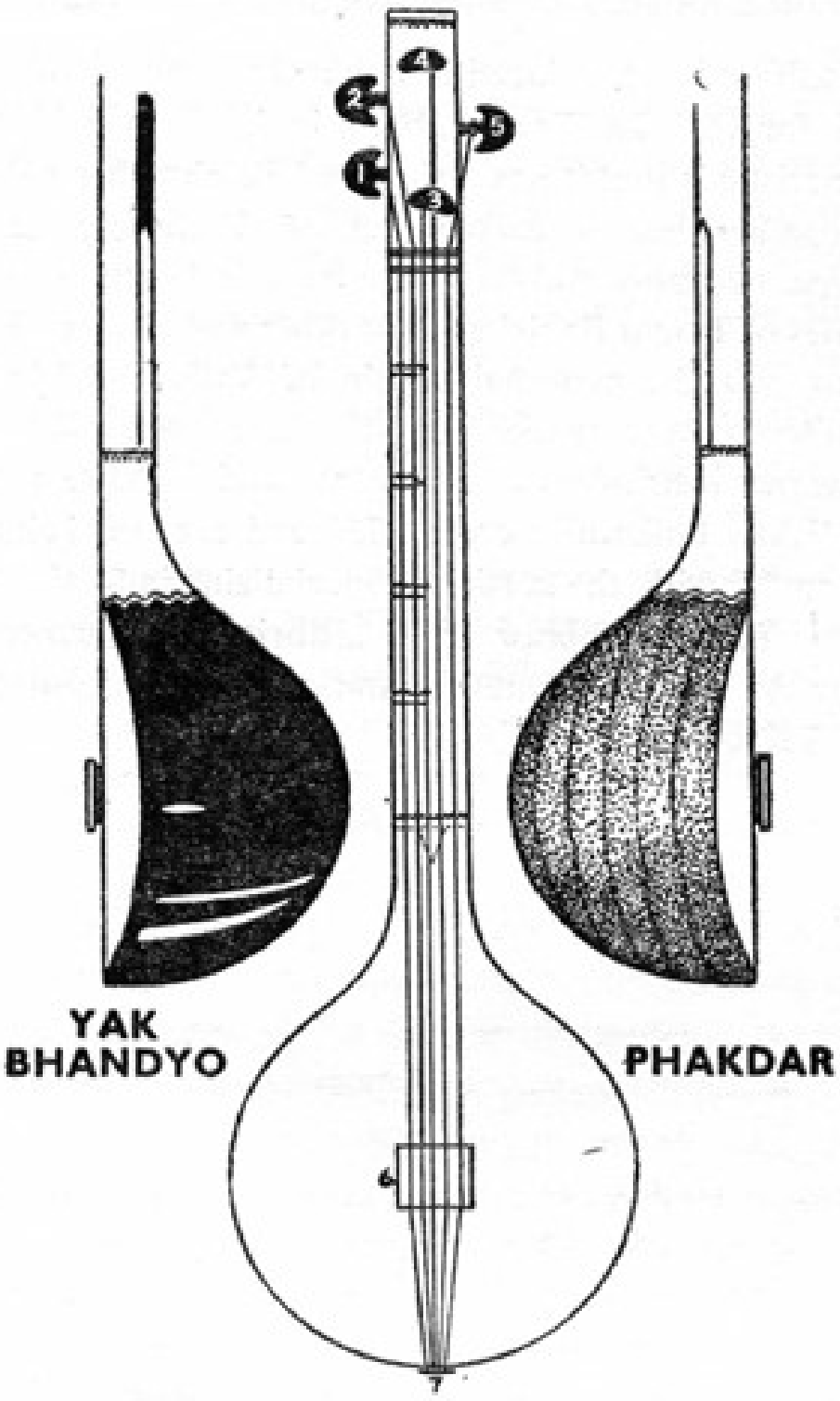
The word ‘Bilawal’ is a musical melody which has a very soothing effect and brings a feeling of peace and calm. In this ‘Sur’ Shah Abdul Latif seeks to utilize the metaphor of noble benign leaders. Who were known for their compassion and generosity, to explain the traits of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) whom the poet duly considers as the supreme leader of such nobles.

At the end, Shah Abdul Latif also refers to his old pal named ‘Wagand’, who had been indulging in various types of indiscretion and imprudence. However, he later repents and reckons his failing and returns to his ‘Mentor’ for his spiritual rehabilitation.

Saaz

Dambooro of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai The musical instrument locally known as Dambooro was designed by Shah Abdul Latif for the new music institution that he himself had founded. The Dambooro was originally invented in Egypt and it travelled to the Indo Pakistan sub-continent through the Middle-East and Persia. The instrument used by the early Arab musicians had four strings and so the conventional Dambooro of this subcontinent remained a chau-tara or four-stringed. Shah Abdul Latif made his new Damboora 5 –stringed instrument. So far as the composition of notes is concerned, its five strings are tuned as follows: At one end, the outer string is tuned at the pancham note of the MadhSaptak or Middle Octave. This string is called 'Zuban' i.e., (the 'tongue) of the Dambooro spells out the melodies. Thus, pancham as kharaj becomes the basic performing note. This principle is in line with the original Arab-Persian tradition and even today the Arab-Iranian melodies are sung at a higher pitch. The remaining four strings of the Dambooro starting from the other end are tuned as: The first one, called ghore after the Baluchistan danbeera, tuning at the SA note of Mandar Saptak or the lower octave; second and third, the jarryoon or the 'twins' tuning at SA note of the Madh Saptak or the medium octave; and the 4th one, the teep (adjacent to the 'Zuban') tuning at the SA note of the Tar Saptak or the (higher octave.) Tamar Faqir was the leader of the group of musicians who sang Shah Abdul Latif's poetry in new Surs and in a new style devised by the poet himself. Fortunately, the Dambooro used by Tamar is still preserved at the poet's mausoleum at BhitShah by the musicians who succeeded him. Every Thursday evening, it was taken out and its strings are touched first by the leading musicians, as a mark of respect to the first leader who lived and played during Shah Abdul Latif's time. This Dambooro was the first one to be made under the personal supervision of Shah Abdul Latif at Thattha I have daubt which, having been the capital of Sindh, was still a centre of music tradition (which

could be traced back to the reign of the Tarkhan, Mirza Jani Beg and his son Mirza Ghazi Beg, of the seventeenth century). Shah Abdul Latif frequently visited Thattha to meet his friend, the eminent scholar Makhdoom Mohammad Mo'in (d. 1161 A.H/1748 A.D) who used to listen to music. It was during those visits the Shah Abdul Latif got the Dambooro made at Thattha and then handed it over to Tamar who was destined to play a leading role in the new music institution founded by Shah Abdul Latif at Bhit. Tamar's Dambooro is a5-stringed instrument like all the other Dambooros which have been used for Shah Latif Bhitai's Sur, but it is simple in making and less decorated. Its main characteristic is that it has single-whole chamber (Yak-bhandyo) which is not pieced together but is carved out of a single piece of wood. After this first prototype, two more Damboors were made at Thattha, one of which remained with the associates of Tamar Faqir and the other was given to Khalifa Mohammad Aalum Dero, who was maternal cousin of Shah Abdul Latif. Subsequently, three more Dambooros were made and all these were also single whole chambered (Yak-bhandya) instruments. Later on, and in more recent times, pieced chambered (phankdar) Dambooros were made (and are still being made) and these became more popular with the musicians specializing in Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's. However, Tamar Faqir's Dambooro is historical in significance both as an instrument devised by the great poet himself and as a new kind of Dambooro that was invented in the sub-continent In Sindhi music Sama means to sing the text of the Sufi Faqirs and Darvashis. Generally it is sung on the shrines of Sufi saints.



1. Zuban
2. Teep
3-4. Jarryoon
5. Ghore

DUMBOORO

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